

PROTECTING YOUNG WOMEN FROM CERVICAL CANCER CAUSED BY HPV

December 2006

WHAT IS HPV?

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a virus common in the United States and around the world and is the major cause of cervical cancer in women. The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2006, over 9,710 women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with cervical cancer and 3,700 will die from this disease. Every year, about 6.2 million people in the U.S. are infected with HPV, most commonly young women and men who are in their late teens and early 20s.

HPV is associated with several other types of cancer and causes precancerous genital lesions, and genital warts. Gardasil® is the first vaccine developed to prevent these diseases by protecting young women from some types of HPV.

HPV is spread by sexual contact and is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the US. At least 50% of

sexually active people will become infected with HPV at some time in their lives. Condoms may reduce the risk of HPV infection, if used all the time and the right way. Ideally, HPV vaccine should be administered before onset of sexual activity, but sexually active females should still be vaccinated.

The New Hampshire Immunization Program (NHIP) will be supplying Gardasil® to providers for the immunization of young women age 11 through 18 (as funding and supply allows).

FACTS ABOUT GARDASIL®

- Provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18 that cause 70% of cervical cancers and types 6 and 11 which cause 90% of genital warts.
- Licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Will not treat existing HPV infections or their complications.
- Has shown no serious side effects. The most common side effect is brief soreness at the injection site.
- Does not contain thimerosal or mercury.
- Should not be given to pregnant women.
- Provides protection against four HPV types for at least five years. It is not known at this time if a booster will be necessary.

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

Cervical cancer screening is still recommended for those who have received this vaccine for three reasons.

1. The vaccine will NOT provide protection against all types of HPV that cause cervical cancer, so women will still be at risk for some cancers. (There are 100 types of HPV.)
2. Women who do not receive all three doses at the appropriate intervals may not be protected from the HPV types in the vaccine.
3. If a woman has already been infected with an HPV type included in the vaccine, the vaccine will not protect her from that HPV type.



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ACIP RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

On June 29, 2006, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to recommend Gardasil® be routinely given to girls 9-26 years old. Administration of this vaccine requires three doses over a six month period. The first dose is recommended at the adolescent health visit between 11-12 years of age. The second dose should be given two months after the first dose. The third dose should be given six months after the first dose. HPV vaccine may be given with other vaccines. Girls 13-18 years of age should receive Gardasil® if they have not previously been vaccinated. NHIP does not provide vaccine for adolescents 19 years of age or older.



**If you have questions or concerns
about immunizations or vaccines,
call the public health nurses
at the NH Immunization Program,
Monday–Friday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm:
603-271-4482
toll free in NH **800-852-3345 x4482****

NH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Public Health Services

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